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The American Red Cross
Red Cross Institute for Crippled and Disabled Men
311 Fourth Avenue New York City

The Duty of the Medical Profession in the Reconstruction of the War Cripple

WE must count on the return from the front of thousands of crippled soldiers. We must plan to give them the best possible chance for the future.

The government will provide the best of surgical care and special training for self-support. But whether this really puts the disabled man back on his feet in the community depends on whether the attitude of the public operates as a help or hindrance.

The American Red Cross desires to enlist the assistance of members of the medical profession—in their joint rôles of personal advisers and leaders of community opinion—in promoting sound doctrine on these four points:

1. To convince the public that the cripple is not helpless but capable of being restored to complete independence if trained and placed in the right line of work.

2. That it is no kindness to encourage the cripple to idleness; that on the contrary every influence should be brought to bear to have him accept training and prepare for useful employment.

3. That the duty of the community is intelligently to employ him, rather than to expend equivalent energy in social entertainment or in the expression of unwise sympathy which tends more to demoralize than to build up character.

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4. To make known to the public in general, and to the families of soldiers in particular, the remarkable results in the reconstruction of crippled men being attained by modern methods of medical and social science. The greatest terror in war has been the prospect of returning home disabled. It is no more than fair that mothers should know how little the loss of a limb means now to the man who is himself determined to succeed.

The thoughtful consideration of this subject by the medical profession of the United States will constitute a real service to the future of the crippled soldier.

DOUGLAS C. MCMURTRIE

